4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

Concerning Seerkok, the former subsidiary of Erh-ku-lung, it is recorded that it disposed of a property 45 miles (150 *li*) in length and 10 miles (30 *li*) wide.[4] Achia Hutukhtu of Kumbum collected taxes and rents from five tribes of farming Tibetans and the inhabitants of seven valleys.[5] The country for 200 *li* around Kumbum belongs to the monastery; several thousand "tame" barbarians are its subjects.[6] Achia Hutukhtu received from the emperor an extensive region for grazing his herds in Chahar (Inner Mongolia). The contract was written by order of the emperor in 1766.[7] Erh-ku-lung received land from the Ch'i T'u-ssu, where a lot of its subjects farmed. After the revolt of 1723, the Ch'i T'u-ssu responsible for the revolt of Erh-ku-lung lost his title and the subjects who farmed his land. Later he was given a chance to regain his title and subjects, if he could bring those who had revolted to submission. He succeeded, and recovered title and subjects, as described in Part I (p. 50).

It has been recorded that Ch'ü-t'an, which was the first lamasery founded by the Ming emperors, received wide domains so that it was able to build the two large branches of Yao-ts'ao-t'ai and Hung Shan-ssu (*Annals* of Hsining. ch. 15, p. 13). During the Ming dynasty large domains had also been granted to the Karwa and Nang-suo institutions, as noted above. Most of the minor Living Buddhas also possessed domains granted by T'u-ssu or wealthy people, or which they purchased themselves.

If account is taken of all these facts, it is easy to understand why the Chinese officials, who before 1723 could not collect taxes on all these vast domains, harbored an enormous jealousy, and why they exulted after the revolt when the emperor assigned the collection of these taxes to them. The text of the author of the *Annals* of Hsining records (chap. 31, p. 22) that " . . . in 1727, by decree, the emperor in one day, put an end to calamities lasting hundreds of years." This text, on the one hand, proves the rejoicing of the Chinese officials at that time; on the other hand, the loss of these enormous revenues impoverished the monasteries tremendously. The lamas, however, were very proficient in finding a means to cushion the shock to some extent.[8]

RENTS

After the revolt, the lamas could only receive the rent of their tenants in the way in which a rich landowner received them; but it was customary that the government receive the taxes, not directly from the tenants,

[4] *Meng-tsang Fo-chiao shih* 5: 123.
[5] *Ibid.*, 143.
[6] *Ibid.*, 11.
[7] *Ibid.*, 143.
[8] In 1948 according to the official data provided by the Bureau of the actual province of Ch'ing-hai (Hsining), only 177 of the 235 lamaseries, owned collectively about 500,000 *mou* (acres) of land and 5,000 to 6,000 head of livestock. Wang Wen-han, *Pien-chiang tung-hsin* 1: 1–7, 1948.

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

but from the landowner who, in case the tenant disappeared or became insolvent, was responsible for the tax. In this way the lamas who were landowners had to collect the official taxes from their tenants, and accompany the endless caravans of their tenants' donkeys carrying grain to the official granaries. Before the journey to the granary started, however, each tenant had to measure the grain in the presence of the lamas and with the measure supplied by the lamas, the capacity of which was greater than the official one; this enabled the lamas to set aside a valuable surplus over the vast amount of official taxes.

The properties of the lamaseries, consisting of extensive territories, contain a large part of waste and untilled land on which no taxes are imposed. The industrious intendants developed these properties by means of irrigation canals, and called in new farmers to till the new fields. The legal amount of taxes, however, has always remained the same as the initial amount, because the intendants, by means of collusion and bribery, easily succeed in gaining over the tax collectors. In this way the revenues of the intendancies are greatly increased, and they still receive surreptitiously a very large revenue. Moreover, they are able to store the surplus, which they can grind or sell when prices are highest.

HERDS

Sheep, cows, and horses constitute, for many intendancies, a source of revenue. Large herds are grazed in Kukunor or Mongolia where the pastures are larger, smaller herds in the country for local use. Mongol princes and Tibetan chiefs of tribes are always ready to help the monasteries. A contract is made with herdsmen by which the first calves, colts, and lambs belong to the owner, the second-born to the herdsman, and so on. Every three years a lama inspector of the intendancy examines the accounts of the herdsmen and settles with them the number of animals to be sold, and the herdsmen show the skins of the animals which died during the three-year period. If they cannot produce the skins of the dead animals it is assumed that they sold the animals and they must pay the owner of the herds.

OIL AND GRAIN MILLS

These mills are a large source of revenue. The monastery proper of Erh-ku-lung is owner of twenty-four oil and grain mills; the T'u-kuan himself has eighteen, Chang-chia nine. The mills are leased by Monguors or Chinese. The rent of oil mills is 300 pounds of oil for a season's use, besides which it must press the oil belonging to the monastery. The grain miller must grind the grain of the intendancy and at the New Year season give a pig weighing 120 pounds. Most of the oil which is not consumed in the kitchen in the preparation of food, or in the lamps in the temples and homes, is sent by raft to Lan-chou, the capital of the province.

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4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

to become a subject of a lamasery, had to be relieved of military service, corvée, and allegiance to his clan chief. The loss of a subject for the clan chief meant loss of a soldier, a tiller of his soil, and a payer of land taxes—a considerable detriment to his power and his wealth. It is obvious that the loss of a couple of families did not matter too much, but the loss of numerous families would have disturbed the clan chiefs and made them try to prevent the illegal desertion of their subjects.

However, at that time Lamaism was at the height of its glory and power. Even the discontented Chinese officials had no way to oppose the omnipotent Living Buddhas pampered at the court in Peking, and could not lend a helping hand to the T'u-ssu, urging the return of their subjects and bringing suit over the encroachment on their rights. The T'u-ssu, willy-nilly, saw their subjects leave them in large numbers, lured by the more favorable conditions of living offered by the lamaseries.

In this way the lamaseries assembled the group of subjects referred to by the author of the *Annals*, who of their own free will became genuine monastery serfs ("Shabinar"), free of allegiance to their clan chiefs. In 1723, being the actual serfs of the lamaseries, they were compelled to fight at the side of the lamas, their chiefs, against the Chinese armies, according to the general conditions imposed on serfs and subjects.

PRESENT STATUS OF THE SUBJECTS IN RELATION TO THE LAMASERIES

Notwithstanding the drastic regulations decreed after 1723 in order to loose completely all the ties which bound the subjects to the lamaseries, and to avoid revolts in the future, the subjects still continue to recognize some obligations to the lamaseries.

Farmers Offering Oil and Pigs

From 1723 until 1910, the so-called subjects paid their rent in kind and carried it to the monastery; the farmers were organized in villages, and each village continued to offer as before, in the autumn of each year, a certain number of pounds of vegetable oil to the intendancy whose fields they tilled; it was considered as an offering for the lamps in the temples of the intendency. In addition, every year in the New Year season they continued to bring to the same intendancy a pig weighing 120 pounds. If the scale did not tip 120 pounds, the weight lacking was made up in pork. In former times when subjects married, it was customary for the family of the bride to demand from the family of the bridegroom a portion for the lamas. This consisted of 30 pounds of pork, and was offered to the intendancy on which the family of the bride depended. At present the 30 pounds of pork are still asked for and presented to the family of the bride, but the meat no longer reaches the intendancy.

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chiliarchs still exist in Kumbum, Erh-ku-lung and Seerkok), meting out punishments (instruments of torture are still displayed at lama courts), and imprisonment (the prison of Seerkok still exists); caring for the preservation of peace and order in the territories assigned to them, inquiring about travelers passing through it; administering the distribution of fields, the imposition and collection of taxes, the imposition of tolls on bridges (the bridge of T'ien t'ang and raft of Kan ch'an), and the imposition of corvées.

At the time of the inroads of marauding Mongol and Tibetan tribes, the revolts of Moslems, and the lama revolt against China in 1723, the subjects were compelled by the lamas to take sides with them in combat and in defending the lamaseries and their territories. In short, the privileges bestowed upon the chiefs of the lama institutions before 1723 were far-reaching. They were units, scattered over the country, administering their subjects according to their own rules and customs, entirely free from the interference of Chinese officials.

The lamaseries were the administrative centers of the groups subordinated to them. All the country's wealth flowed into their granaries and treasuries. Moreover, the lamas tended herds of cows, sheep, and horses, built oil and grain mills, and received donations. The lamaseries were the only places where huge sums of money could be borrowed (Li and Ch'i T'u-ssu borrowed money from them by mortgaging parts of their properties). They removed the wealth of the country from circulation and hoarded it or used it to found new lama communities (the tremendous branching out of monasteries between 1600 and 1723). They did not even use it for charitable institutions for the people of the country.

The lamaseries, originally built in lonely places and in remote valleys, in order that the monks would not be disturbed in their meditations and studies by the tumult of the world, were in olden times the most animated places of the country. In autumn the subjects carried taxes and rents on long caravans of donkeys to their granaries. The measuring of grain went on, as it did all over Asia, with rumbling noise and cries, bursting with activity for weeks in succession. At the time of exchanging tea for horses all the subjects were interested in the assessment of the horses. The tumult and discussions on the grounds of the monastery lasted for days and days. The selection of the horses for tribute to the emperor was conducted with like tumult and confusion, and often for the same length of time. Two or three times a year large festivals were held at the monasteries. They were attended by all the people of the country interested in horse racing, wrestling, singing, dancing, and in the big fairs held at that time. Chinese traders came from the city, pitched their tents, paid toll to the lamas, and sold their wares. The Monguors and Tibetans also arrived with their homespun

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4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

products and animals for trading. All year long the silence of the holy places was disturbed by the coming and going of caravans of donkeys carrying grain to the oil and grain mills, and returning with flour and oil which was measured with the usual rumble of noise and cries. Throughout the year, groups of subjects never failed to become involved in trials, defending their rights by roaring and crying with vehemence and passion at the court of lamas. Punishments were meted out with ruthless severity, so that cries and screams could be heard throughout the entire monastery—whetting the curiosity and disturbing the meditation of the monks. 792 175 651 427

The interest of the subjects was centered only on the monastery. There was no need for them to go to the city, since the necessities of life could be secured at the monastery fairs and nobody cared for the Chinese officials, the lamas being their legal officials. Many, many people had never seen or entered a city. The monasteries and their subjects lived their own life, in their own orbit, alien to the city, just as if Chinese officials did not exist. 175 633 792

These conditions changed after 1723 when the lamas lost their privileges and the country developed economically. From that time on the city became the center of the economic, civil, and administrative life; before that time, it had been primarily a military center, engrossed in the protection of the country.

What was the social position of the subjects of the lama institutions before 1723? It seems that religion must have been a subsidiary and not a primary motive for becoming subjects of the lamas, because all of them were spurred by the hope of earning a better living under the lama regime than under the regimes of the Chinese officials or the Monguor T'u-ssu. Having been driven out of their territories by marauding Mongols, they may have hoped to find a peaceful country within the frontier zone of China, on the domains of the lamas. Being groups or tribes, or single families of destitute people, they were happy to submit to lama chiefs, and they were thankful to them for being accepted as their subjects. They did not lay claim to any rights, and the lamas did not consider that they were entitled to any, because they had achieved nothing that could have supported such claims. In this way the lamas strove to make their domains more and more productive, and were only concerned with the duties to be imposed on the subjects, without paying any attention whatever to rights they might have claimed. 175 792 571

The subjects were all on the same social level; there was no more question of nobles and commoners among them. They were all equally subject to taxes and corvées, and all of them were tenants of the fields of the lamas. They enjoyed the rights to live, to till the soil, and to consume the surplus of their labor. Since the lamas never sold their fields, the subjects had no opportunity to become proprietors of the soil, as was the 175 565 792

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